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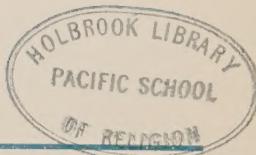
the WORLD ALLIANCE for INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP THROUGH THE CHURCHES

the WORLD ALLIANCE of YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS

the WORLD'S YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

the WORLD'S STUDENT CHRISTIAN FEDERATION

the WORLD'S SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION



The aim of the Ecumenical Press Service is to keep its readers informed of trends of thought and opinion in and about the Churches and Christian movements. It is therefore not to be held responsible for opinions expressed in its news items.

No. 28/29

Fourteenth Year

July 18, 1947

CANADA

International Missionary Council Meeting

The meeting of the enlarged Committee of the Council of the International Missionary Council, was in session at Whitby, Canada, from July 5 to 18. The meeting was most international, for the official delegates, plus speakers and consultants, represented some forty or more countries, with the exception of Japan. At least ten fall in the classification of young people. And there were twelve women present in official capacity. The laity was also well represented by medical doctors, lawyers, etc. Church affiliation indicated a dozen of the major denominations of the world, some half dozen national Churches, and one from the Batak Church of Indonesia.

The opening session was exceedingly impressive and included a welcome from the Mayor of Whitby and the Very Rev. J.H. Arnup, representing the Canadian Overseas Missions Council - the host of the conference. The chairman of the International Missionary Council, the Rev. Bishop James C. Baker, in his responding address stressed the point that "Jesus Christ is the same today as yesterday and will be so forever". The climax of the evening was the address by Dr. John R. Mott - world citizen, world Christian, and honorary chairman of the Council.

Dr Mott said his heart had never beat higher with hope than now, for several reasons: the limitless possibilities of suffering, man's extremity is God's opportunity, knowledge and experience are great teachers, there are more Christians today than ever before in the world's history, more money is available today, the power of organisation which has been developed, no door is closed to the constructive and friendly ministry of the Church, and, as Dr Mott affirmed "we have a larger Christ who, as we lift Him up, will make a profound, revolutionary, and enduring impression upon humanity."

Another high spot was the Communion Service held Monday, July 7, at seven in the morning, according to the Anglican rite. It was most impressive to see the representatives of many races and many Churches partaking of the Lord's Supper together.

E.P.S. Geneva

UNITED STATES"Crossroads of American Foreign Policy"

The Church Commission on a Just and Durable Peace, of which Mr. John Foster Dulles is chairman, prepared a statement issued by the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America on July 2nd. Under the heading "Crossroads of American Foreign Policy", the statement deals with four topics: relief and reconstruction; relations with Russia; relations with the United Nations; and moral bases underlying these relations. The statement was submitted to the Executive Committee of the Federal Council, at a meeting presided over by Mr. Charles P. Taft, president of the Council, and was officially approved.

In its concluding summary the foreign policy statement asserts: "Our people need to do much more than they are doing to demonstrate their conviction that the greatest forces in the world are moral forces and not material forces... We utterly reject the idea of the inevitability of war and we oppose all national policies which have that presupposition... There is increasing discussion of military establishment... Hysteria is growing at a time which is so critical that calmness of judgment is indispensable. That hysteria suggests a sense of weakness and lack of Christian faith."

Concerning relief, the Federal Council statement asserts that "Christian precept and enlightened self-interest call for United States' economic aid to a degree not yet understood or accepted by our people". The United States, it is held, cannot safely or happily be an island of abundance in a sea of privations. It is proposed that American aid be apportioned both to meet immediate need and for long-range reconstruction. "Where resources are so limited that a choice has to be made (we should) favour those who are intelligently striving to help themselves and to help others. Relief ought not, however, to be used as a tool for fostering political alliances..."

On the question of Russia the statement says: "The supreme and critical issue is that of the free society versus the police state". When we make clear "by word and deed, at home and abroad" that we stand for free society and against the police state we "will have identified (ourselves) with a great principle which equally attracts the loyalty of men generally."

The third section of the Federal Council of Churches' statement emphasises particularly the power of the United Nations General Assembly "to mobilise the preponderant moral sentiment of the world", and asserts that "the United States ought to place greater dependence on this demonstrated moral power of the world assembly."

In drafting the Federal Council statement, the Commission on a Just and Durable Peace "emphasised some of the ingredients of a positive foreign policy which we believe stems from positive Christian principles. The positive foreign policy we emphasise will require strong spiritual foundations both at home and abroad. Herein lies a major challenge to the Churches... No policy, in a free society, can be permanently stronger than the faith of the people. Dynamic international policies must reflect a dynamic faith if they are to endure; they must reflect a righteous faith if they are worthy to endure."

E.P.S. Geneva

SWEDENLutheran Churches Form World Federation

A year ago, when the Executive Committee of the old Lutheran World Convention met in Uppsala, Sweden, the first plan was made for an Assembly in June 1947 in Lund, Sweden. There were many who expressed grave doubts that such an important meeting could be held with only one year to prepare. But at ten o'clock in the morning on June 30, 1947, when there were 500 delegates and official visitors assembled in Lund's 800 year old Cathedral, every one knew that a new day had dawned for the Lutheran Churches of the world. Archbishop Eidem preached the opening sermon. Official delegates and official consultants from 24 countries partook Holy Communion. They represented Australia, Austria, British Guiana, Canada, China, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, England, Finland, France, Estonia, Germany, Holland, Hungary, Iceland, India, Latvia, Lithuania, Madagascar, Norway, Poland, South Africa, Sweden, and the United States of America. The Archbishop's sermon based on Colossians 3:12-17, together with the impressive Communion service gave inspiration for the entire week.

Programme.- The theme of the programme for the week was: "The Lutheran Church in the World Today". Three commissions had prepared three reports for the three study sections. Commission I (Prof. A. Nygren, Lund), reported on "The Lutheran Church Confessing 'The Truth' in a Confused World". Commission II (Dr F.C. Fry, President of the United Lutheran Church of America) reported on "The Lutheran Church Performing her Task in a Devastated World". Commission III (Bishop H. Lilje, Germany) reported on "The Lutheran Church Facing the Problems of a Troubled World".

Constitution.- One of the most dramatic moments of the week was when the unanimous vote was taken ratifying the constitution. Thirty-nine different autonomous Church-bodies signed the constitution. In this new Constitution the old name "Convention" was dropped and the new world-body of Lutherans will be known as a "Federation". Members of the Federation must be autonomous Lutheran Churches. Federations of Lutheran Churches cannot be members. The Constitution provides that an assembly of the Federation shall be held every five years, and that an Executive Committee of sixteen, which will include the President, shall act for the assembly "ad interim" and hold a meeting at least once a year. The following officers were elected for the next five years: President Professor Anders Nygren (Sweden), Vice-Presidents Dr Abdel Ross Wentz (U.S.A.) and Bishop Lajos Ordass (Hungary), Treasurer Dr Ralph H. Long (U.S.A.). Other members of the Executive Committee are Dr Alfred Th. Jorgensen (Denmark), Archbishop A. Lehtonen (Finland), Mr. Charles Delbruck (France), Bishop H. Meiser, Bishop H. Lilje, Bishop N. Beste, Professor E. Sommerlath (Germany), Pastor G. Lakra (India), Archbishop Th. Gruenbergs (Latvian Church in Exile), Dr Franklin Clark Fry and Dr. J.A. Aasgaard (U.S.A.), Bishop Smemo (Norway). The Executive Secretary Dr. S. Michelfelder has been reelected for a period of five years. It was also resolved to keep the office of the Executive Secretary at Geneva. This will mean that in the Reconstruction programme of the World Council of Churches the Lutheran work will be coordinated.

Representation in the World Council of Churches.- The Lutheran World Federation has expressed itself as favouring confessional representation in the World Council of Churches, endorsing the change in the Constitution which

is being recommended to the Assembly of the World Council in Amsterdam in 1948. The Lutheran World Federation has also named the Executive Secretary Dr Michelfelder as consultant delegate to the Amsterdam Assembly of the World Council of Churches for the Federation.

High-Lights.- Some of the high-lights of the Convention were:

1. Fellowship. For the first time in the history of the Lutheran Church representative delegates came together to discuss and then to complete a Federation. Perhaps the best commentary can be made on the fellowship by the statement of one who came from a Lutheran Church in a country, with whom the Allied powers have not as yet signed a peace treaty. He said: "We came here to meet representatives from various countries but found the Church." Norwegians and Germans, Danes and Austrians, Czechoslovakians and Hungarians, Indians, Chinese, Americans were in close fellowship in the study groups, in the plenary sessions and in the free time. There was no evidence of the tension that exists in the world between nations. Here was proof that "the peace of God which passeth all understanding" can bring nations and races together, under the banner of the Cross.
2. The second outstanding impression was the unity of faith. Though the Lutheran Church has grown up in various continents, in different environments and many languages, there is a unity of confession and a desire to hold to this unity with renewed determination, making the Word of God the sole source and norm of faith and confession. There is an ever increasing appreciation of the Sacraments common to all recognising the Church as the divinely instituted body which should be a Church in the full sense of the term, entrusted with the precious Means of Grace for salvation of the individual and society.
3. Then there was a feeling of unity of purpose. The place of the Lutheran World Federation was quite clearly to become the medium for sharing the strength of the strong with the weak, so that united testimony can be borne in a confused, devastated and troubled world,

Problems Discussed.- The question of materialism, secularism, nihilism, decline of morals, the problems of races, of refugees and Displaced Persons were discussed, and it was realised that there were problems that the great Lutheran Church must help to solve.

Plans for the Future.- After the plans for the future, the next meeting of the Executive Committee will be held in Amsterdam about the middle of August, 1948. National Committees will be formed in each of the countries where the Lutheran Church has autonomous churches. Special Commissions will be formed for theological study, the continuation of the studies of this Assembly and also in preparation for the next Assembly in 1952. Resolutions asking for Commissions for laymen, youth missions, reconstruction, social welfare, were requested. Other Commissions will take up publications and publicity, social welfare programmes. It was further resolved to enlarge the service of the News Bulletin, which is the official organ for the dissemination of news. The staff in Geneva will be enlarged to include a special editor for news to be disseminated in the German language in addition to the English. It was also resolved to establish a quarterly magazine, to be known as the "Lutheran World Review".

E.P.S. Geneva

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Message of the Lutheran World Federation

The Lutheran World Federation in session at Lund, Sweden, has extended Christian greetings to all congregations and assemblies. Here are the main passages of this message:

"As representatives of Lutheran Churches from all parts of the world, we express first of all our profound gratitude to the great Head of the Church, that in these days of tension and distraction in the world He has permitted so great a company of fellow Lutherans to gather together in harmony and Christian love..."

"The federation of the Lutheran Churches of the world has now become a reality. Based on solid Scriptural foundations, it has been formed in Christian faith and love. This brings to fulfillment at last a great dream that for centuries has lived in the hearts of Lutheran people..."

"During these sacred days we have pondered with the utmost seriousness our duty as a church to a world in confusion. It became clear that all of us must cultivate a more profound faith, a more vigorous testimony and a more energetic cooperation in Christian service.

"We desire to walk in peace and coordinated purpose with Christian Churches of whatever name. Yet there arose among us here in frequent repetition the determination to understand more fully and to hold more firmly the heritage of the Lutheran Reformation. So will we cultivate our faith..."

"From those who have languished in prison cells, in dungeons, and behind barbed-wire barricades, came the cry: 'Back to the Bible'. They have discovered the Bible as the Word of God in very truth. They have learned to know the Apostles of the New Testament as their own contemporaries, as they have faced the evil in the hearts of men and as they have witnessed the power of God to save.

"Again and again the Assembly at Lund received concrete testimony that the Confessions of the Lutheran Church have proved to be in our very day a power which upholds and sustains men in times of utmost trial. Over and over the spirit of the gathering could be expressed in the words: 'Forward to Luther! Forward to Christ and the Prophets and Apostles!'

"The Lutheran World Federation presents no easy remedy for the ills of the world... The only answer is truth, the truth as it is in Christ Jesus..."

"We call on all our fellow believers around the whole world to join with us in accepting the responsibilities of this unity in faith, this fellowship in blessing, and this community of suffering. Like Israel, confronting the ruined walls of Jerusalem, we must arise and build.

"Each one must build the wall that is over against his own house. Each must help with the whole. There is no one so strong as not to need the help of the neighbour. There is no one so weak as not to be able to strengthen his brother's heart and hand."

E.P.S.Geneva

GREAT BRITAINTheological Faculty in German POW Camp

The Theological Faculty of the German prisoner of war camp at Norton in England has sent a report on its activities for the winter term 1946-1947. The programme of work has been extended by courses on systematic and practical theology and a course on the mission. In addition the number of students has grown and each has had to present a written thesis during the course of the term.

The 24 lecture periods and theological classes and the 51 language periods are divided among ten permanent professors and two half-time professors; there are also three periods on church music and two classes on the Anglican Church, given by an English professor.

There have also been a certain number of visitors from outside who have given lectures or courses, including Professor Zernov of the Russian Orthodox Church, Professor Nygren from Lund and Professor Søe from Copenhagen. These courses were attended by 65 students.

Apart from the Theological Faculty, the Norton camp runs courses for lay preachers and youth leaders. The first of these courses have been considerably interrupted by repatriation, so that only three of those who took part have been able to take the final examination and be sent out to camps where there are no pastors.

It should finally be mentioned that the "Monatsbrief" is published, printed and distributed by the theologians of the Norton camp, and that 38,000 copies are brought out and circulated in all camps. E.P.S. Geneva

NETHERLANDSThe Church and the Political Prisoners

During the past year there have been profound discussions between representatives of the different Protestant Churches and the Roman Catholic Church and some twenty-five former leaders of the National Socialist movement in the Netherlands, who are still in internment camps in Holland. As a result of these discussions the General Synod of the Netherlands Reformed Church has published a message, which was read in all the churches on Sunday, July 13, 1947. This message was drawn up by the Protestant Churches and the Roman Catholic Church, united in the Interchurch Council, which was set up during the war. It reads as follows:

"During the war the Churches in the Netherlands openly bore witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and opposed all the evil deeds of the oppressor. They also prayed for the enemies of our people, who inflicted such bitter suffering, praying that they might repent. After the war the Churches had to exhort the government and the people to do justice and to be merciful according to the will of God."

"In the treatment of the political delinquents in the prisoner of war camps, our people acted in a way which was unworthy of a Christian nation. Our people still have the tendency to be blind to their own sins and to take the law into their own hands and to banish those who have been punished already by the government."

"The Churches therefore think it their duty to comply with a request made by some twenty-five political prisoners, who once played a prominent part in the National Socialist movement in Holland to make a confession of guilt to the Dutch people and to give an explanation of their attitude during the war."

Confession of Guilt.-- "For two years already, we, as former Nazi leaders in Holland have been weighed down by a forced silence, which is the more painful as a growing conviction of our guilt was borne in us.

"We make this confession of guilt to the Dutch people, who with justified indignation hold us guilty for the bitter suffering it underwent during the five years of occupation. We hope that our words will be understood by all who share our fate and who have taken, with us, the fatal course of cooperation with the occupying power. There is a wide gulf between us and the majority of the people, a gulf which is hardly to be bridged by goodwill only. We therefore lay this confession of guilt before our people with the utmost diffidence.

"Through our own fault we lived in isolation among the Dutch people and often failed to realise the real meaning and the disastrous consequences of measures imposed upon us by the aggressor. We confess that we have often maintained silence when we ought to have spoken and that we have given the occupying power our cooperation where we ought to have broken this off.

"And when we then think with a sense of deep shame of those who were persecuted, deported, tortured, executed, murdered, of the diabolic annihilation of Jewish men, women and children, then we understand why the Dutch people lay on us the full blame for every sign of solidarity with the enemy.

"A tragic confusion of thought and strange totalitarian ideologies made us blind to the horrible consequences of all this, though we were over and over again earnestly warned that these ideologies were fundamentally opposed to Christian principles.

"We are utterly depressed by the remembrance of these painful errors, but at the same time it has forced us to penetrate deeper into the imperfections of man and thus we have been confronted with the question of guilt.

"We feel an inner urge to entrust our answer to this question to the Churches, which during and after the years of occupation formed a solid centre where a nation in distress could find consolation. We earnestly hope that, in spite of all barriers, our people will accept this confession as a sincere effort to heal the still smarting wounds.

"In the consciousness of our guilt, especially towards God, before Whose judgment we have to bow, we pray He may forgive us, that He may save our people from permanent hatred and save us and our fellow-prisoners from embitterment which might bar for us the way of reconciliation."

To this confession of guilt an explanation is added, not, as the authors say, "to lessen the force of our confession, but as a cry of distress to the Dutch people to beseech them to conceive the depth of the spiritual struggle which has been fought."

"We have come to regard many relationships in a different light and in dismay and consternation we have asked ourselves: How could we ever have done this! With deep shame we have to state that we chose the side of those who were responsible for atrocious crimes. Now we understand the views of the people who turned against the occupying power during the war, and who turned away from us. We cannot but admit that our relationship with the Germans gave them the right to do this and that it has hurt them sorely. Yet we earnestly appeal to our people to listen to us, not because we want to unburden ourselves, but because we were and are Dutch citizens and because we wish to remain so and therefore we did not commit deliberate treason.

"With regard to the war days of 1940, we ask our people to take note of the official statements, which refute the grievous accusation of high-treason, committed during those days. We became National Socialists from a deep desire for social justice and for the uplift of the nation. After 1940 we could not get away from the conviction that the destruction of Germany would mean utter chaos in Europe and the ruin of our own country. We know that there have been profiteers and criminal elements in our ranks. The movement as a whole, however, must not be identified with them.

"We plead the honesty of many of our members who thought that they acted for the best and who followed our leadership. We especially plead for the tens of thousands of young men who joined the enemy armies and who have to bear severe punishments while we were responsible for their actions. Many of them fought for their country and sacrificed their lives. May God accept the sincerity of their sacrifices.

"May this confession of guilt and the explanation of it be accepted by our people with the same earnestness with which we have made it."

E.P.S.Geneva

FRANCE

Christians and Ecumenicity

The last three combined numbers of "Catholicité", a Roman Catholic paper published at Lille, France, appearing in one edition July 1947, deal with the question of "Chrétiens devant l'œcuménisme". There are a number of contributions from Roman Catholic, Anglican, Orthodox and Protestant authors, who take "Christians united before the Cross" as their watchword. In Christ "in a sanctifying communion between fellow Christians, they mutually ask forgiveness one of another for the injustices and atrocities of which they have been guilty throughout the ages. They humbly confess to God their responsibility for the way in which the evangelisation of the world has been held back on account of these fatal mistakes. They all ask Him who through atonement for the sins of the world, has saved their own souls, to fill their minds unceasingly with the prayer of the Lord's Supper: 'That they may be one that the world may believe'.

Although and because "Catholicité" is intended for Catholic readers, non-Catholics, "who were kind enough to cooperate", were allowed complete freedom of expression. Their contributions show a viewpoint which "is not the viewpoint of our Roman Catholic faith", but they are palpable proof of the "formidable religious movement of modern times, burning with sacred zeal, bearing undeniable witness of the power of the Holy Spirit throughout the world."

In referring to the meeting of the Consistory of the Roman Catholic Church in Rome and the meeting of the Provisional Committee of the World Council of Churches, which took place at the same time in 1946, it is stated: "Rome and Geneva, Geneva and Rome. Neither has opposed the other. Epic diptych which is altogether to God's glory! Here and there, only His will is sought after, only the voice of His Holy spirit is heard. In Rome, a calm beauty of unity which is affirming itself. In Geneva, a tragic beauty of unity which is being sought after.

"God who is love and light has, in His mysterious ways, brought the two together, so that Christians of all denominations will learn to walk together in the unity of Charity in order to attain unity of Truth. The Roman Catholic Church, which is the centre of truth, has the great honour and great duty of being the first in humility in order to be the first in charity."

In conclusion there follows a number of ecumenical statements from Catholic and Evangelical sources, including the addresses given by Bishop Berggrav (Norway) and Pastor Niemöller (Germany) at the ecumenical service in St Pierre cathedral at Geneva in February 1946, the message from the World Council to the Churches, a report on the inauguration of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey and so on.

E.P.S. Geneva

Death of Father Sergius Tsheverikov

The leaflet of the Russian Christian Student Movement in Paris, "Vestnik Tserkovnoi Shisni" (Messenger on Church Life), No. 8, July 1947, brings the sad news of the loss of its spiritual head, Father Sergius Tsheverikov, in Prague, as long ago as April 29, 1947, in his eightieth year, after fifty one years of vigorous priestly activity. He was the incarnation of that ecumenical open-mindedness about the world-wide Church of Christ which for Orthodox Christians reaches its highest form in the conception of the "Sobornost".

Father Sergius' spiritual legacy lives on not only in the tradition of the Russian Christian Student Movement, but is present in numerous writings, articles and personal letters, which will wake an echo beyond it. "In this emigration, so rich in eminent ecclesiastics, says the obituary in the leaflet, there was and is no priest to compare with Father Sergius in spiritual authority, in the love given him by his spiritual children, or in his extensive relations not only with young people but with innumerable adults in need of his counsel and his instruction."

E.P.S. Geneva

UNITED STATES

Urging Anti-Lynching Bill

A resolution urging the passage of the proposed Federal anti-lynching bill, providing criminal penalties against local officials failing to prosecute lynching was forwarded to Congressional leaders by the Human Relations Commission of the Protestant Council of the City of New York.

The resolution said: "Lynching is a fundamental denial of human right. It is a defiance of law and the processes of justice. It is also a shame of America which, flaunted before the world, does much to undermine faith and hope in democracy. Since 1882 there have been 4932 lynchings in the United States and in 99,2 per cent of these no punishment resulted."

The Commission also endorsed a resolution asking for the restitution of property losses to a number of Japanese Americans evacuated from the Pacific coast at the outbreak of the war.

The Commission members include Bishop Ch.K. Gilbert (Methodist), the Rev. Dr Robert W. Searle, the Rev. Dr Henry Sloane Coffin (Presbyterian), Professor E.Johnson, Dr John H. Warnshuis. E.P.S. Geneva

GERMANYReformed Union and E.K.D.

The Moderamen of the Reformed Union has learned of the decisions of the Church Conference in Treysa on the confessional assumptions of the statute of the EKD (see E.P.S. No. 24), and expresses the following conclusions:

"The Moderamen is grateful to the Church Conference for pointing out, in indicating EKD as a union of confessing Churches, that in this union all must hear the Word of God alike, and that when this happens 'the Church in the New Testament sense' comes to pass in EKD. In this pronouncement from the Church Conference it is recognised that the parish is the place in which 'the Church in the New Testament sense comes to pass', for in the parish which devotes itself to the Word and the Sacrament a common hearkening to the Word of God is brought about. EKD's lead has therefore as its ultimate goal the service of the parish, and also the helping of the parishes to serve one another.

"The Moderamen asks therefore that it may be expressed in the statute of EKD that EKD is, without prejudice to its status as a union of Churches, a parish Church." E.P.S. Geneva

GERMANYThe Church Between East and West

The Evangelical Church in the East is, as Oberkirchenrat Walter Zimmermann says, "not only a transit and reception point for displaced persons from separate districts: it is also the mouthpiece of the people in the black night of their suffering, and the guardian of their souls". The West may, in looking at the East, have before its eyes in the first place the meeting of Christians and the Bolshevik ideology, but it cannot see this meeting as it really is. "At the same time, it is easily overlooked, that another meeting is taking place with a people still unknown to them, or rather with a continent containing a whole family of peoples. We are under the impression that the Russian race is unused and therefore has untapped resources, but needs acquaintance and understanding. Serious efforts are being made by the Churches. Meetings with the Russian Church in its present form must also be taking place. Doubtless there are here, as in all other Churches, special gifts and forces, waiting to be used - perhaps those of humility, passionate faith, long-suffering. Should one not say in general from these considerations that the spiritual and intellectual decisions for our people and perhaps for Europe also fall to us in the East? It would be short-sighted to say that what we have learnt before must of necessity repeat itself in the present division of history. But if it should be that the decisive meeting takes place here in the East, a flood of positive, healthy Church vigour should pour from the West towards this field of action."

E.P.S. Geneva

